After the Disappearance of Sri Guru



Sri Srimad Gour
Govinda Swami Maharaja

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Śrī Śrī Guru Gaurāṅga
Rādhā-Gopīnātha Jīu Jayati!

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Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami Maharaja

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Preface

In *Śrī Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 8.248) Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu inquired, "Of all kinds of distress what is the most painful?" To which Raya Ramananda replied, *kṛṣṇa-bhakta-viraha vinā duḥkha nāhi dekhi para* — "Apart from separation from the devotee of Krishna, I know of no unbearable unhappiness." Out of all the devotees, the *Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* (11.2.37) describes the spiritual master as *guru-devatā-ātmā* — one's worshipable deity and one's very life and soul. This booklet is a collection of lecture excerpts and conversations given by Sri Srimad Gour Govinda Swami on the topic of what a disciple should do after the most calamitous occasion of the disappearance of one's guru.

This booklet includes the following subjects: crying in the heart for guru; the dark period after the guru's disappearance; the attitude of the disciple in separation from guru; how the disciple can always realize the presence of guru; and the vital importance of the guru's instructions and service.

We hope that this small booklet may bring some pleasure to our revered spiritual masters and to all *sāragrahi-vaiṣṇavas*.

— The publishers



Introduction

In his purports to Srīmad Bhāgavatam, *fourth canto, chapter twenty-eight, His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupāda described the proper attitude of the disciple after the disappearance of the spiritual master.*

When the mortal body of the spiritual master expires, his disciples should cry exactly as the queen cries when the king leaves his body. However, the disciple and spiritual master are never separated because the spiritual master always keeps company with the disciple as long as the disciple follows strictly the instructions of the spiritual master. This is called the association of *vāṇī* (words). Physical presence is called *vapuḥ*. As long as the spiritual master is physically present, the disciple should serve the physical body of the spiritual master, and when the spiritual master is no longer physically existing, the disciple should serve the instructions of the spiritual master.

(Purport to text 47)

Whenever an *ācārya* comes, following the superior orders of the Supreme Personality of Godhead or His representative, he establishes the principles of religion, as enunciated in *Bhagavad-gītā*. Religion means abiding by the orders of the Supreme Personality of Godhead. Religious principles begin from the time one surrenders to the Supreme Personality of Godhead. It is the *ācārya's* duty to spread a bona fide religious system and induce everyone to bow down before the Supreme Lord. One executes the religious principles by rendering devotional service, specifically the nine items like hearing, chanting, and remembering. Unfortunately, when the *ācārya* disappears, rogues and non-devotees take advantage and immediately begin to introduce unauthorized principles in the name of so-called swamis, yogis, philanthropists, welfare workers, and so on. Actually, human life is meant for executing the orders of the Supreme Lord, and this is stated in *Bhagavad-gītā* (9.34):

man-manā bhava mad-bhakto mad-yājī māṁ namaskuru
mām evaiṣyasi yuktvaivam ātmānaṁ mat-parāyaṇaḥ

Engage your mind always in thinking of Me and become My devotee. Offer obeisances and worship Me. Being completely absorbed in Me, surely you will come to Me.

The main business of human society is to think of the Supreme Personality of Godhead at all times, to become His devotees, to worship the Supreme Lord, and to bow down before Him. The *ācārya*, the authorized representative of the Supreme Lord, establishes these principles, but when he disappears,

things again become disordered. The perfect disciples of the *ācārya* try to relieve the situation by sincerely following the instructions of the spiritual master. Now, practically the entire world is afraid of rogues and non-devotees; therefore this Krishna consciousness movement is started to save the world from irreligious principles. Everyone should cooperate with this movement in order to bring about actual peace and happiness in the world.
(Purport to text 48)

A devoted disciple of the spiritual master would rather die with the spiritual master than fail to execute the spiritual master's mission. As the Supreme Personality of Godhead comes down upon this earth to reestablish the principles of religion, so His representative, the spiritual master, also comes to reestablish religious principles. It is the duty of the disciples to take charge of the mission of the spiritual master and execute it properly. Otherwise, the disciple should decide to die along with the spiritual master. In other words, to execute the will of the spiritual master, the disciple should be prepared to lay down his life and abandon all personal considerations.
(Purport to text 50)



When the Acarya Leaves, One Should Cry

TEXT

uddhava uvāca
kṛṣṇa-dyumaṇi nimloce gīrṇeṣv ajagareṇa ha
kiṁ nu naḥ kuśalaṁ brūyāṁ gata-śrīṣu gṛheṣv aham

Sri Uddhava said: My dear Vidura, the sun of the world, Lord Krishna, has set, and our house has now been swallowed by the great snake of time. What can I say to you about our welfare?

PURPORT

The disappearance of the Krishna sun may be explained as follows, according to the commentary of Srila Viswanath Chakravarti Thakur. Vidura was struck with great sorrow when he got the hint of the annihilation of the great Yadu dynasty as well as of his own family, the Kuru dynasty. Uddhava could understand the grief of Vidura, and therefore he first wanted to sympathize with him by saying that after

the sunset, everyone is in darkness. Since the entire world was merged in the darkness of grief, neither Vidura nor Uddhava nor anyone else could be happy. Uddhava was as much aggrieved as Vidura, and there was nothing further to be said about their welfare. The comparison of Krishna to the sun is very appropriate. As soon as the sun sets, darkness automatically appears. But the darkness experienced by the common person does not affect the sun itself, either at the time of sunrise or of sunset. Lord Krishna's appearance and disappearance are exactly like that of the sun. He appears and disappears in innumerable universes, and as long as He is present in a particular universe there is all transcendental light in that universe, but the universe from which He passes away is put into darkness. His pastimes, however, are everlasting. The Lord is always present in some universe, just as the sun is present in either the eastern or western hemisphere. The sun is always present either in India or in America, but when the sun is present in India, the American land is in darkness, and when the sun is present in America, the Indian hemisphere is in darkness.

As the sun appears in the morning and gradually rises to the meridian, and then again sets in one hemisphere while simultaneously rising in the other, so Lord Krishna's disappearance in one universe and the beginning of His different pastimes in another take place simultaneously. As soon as one pastime is finished here, it is manifested in another universe.

And thus His *nitya-līlā*, eternal pastimes, are going on continuously. As the sunrise takes place once in twenty-four hours, similarly the pastimes of Lord Krishna take place in a universe once in a day of Brahma, which according to *Bhagavad-gītā* is 4,300,000,000 solar years. But wherever the Lord is present, all His different pastimes as described in the revealed scriptures take place at regular intervals.

As at sunset the snakes become powerful, thieves are encouraged, ghosts become active, the lotus becomes disfigured, and the *cakravākī* bird laments, so with the disappearance of Lord Krishna, the atheists feel enlivened and the devotees become sorry.

(*Śrīmad Bhāgavatam* 3.2.7, Translation and purport by His Divine Grace A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada)

• • •

kṛṣṇa sūrya sama; māyā haya andhakāra
yāhāṅ kṛṣṇa tāhāṅ nāhi māyāra adhikāra

It is said, *kṛṣṇa cinmaya-bhāskara* — Krishna is the spiritual sun. And in this purport our revered spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, has explained very nicely that as the sun rises and sets, there is suffering and enlightenment. When the sun rises there is enlightenment and all are happy. Similarly, as long as the Krishna sun is there, His *līlas* are also there. Srila Prabhupada says, "Lord Krishna's disappearance in one universe and the beginning of His different pastimes in another universe take place simultaneously." In some other universe, Lord Krishna's pastimes are going on when they are not

here. As the sun is here now in America, it is absent in India. Darkness is there. Where there is darkness, there is grief. This material world is *duḥkhālayam aśāśvatam* — filled with miseries. And this world is illusory, *māyā*. *kṛṣṇa sūrya sama, māyā haya andhakāra* — Krishna is *sūrya*, the spiritual sun; and *māyā*, the illusory energy, is darkness, ignorance. Those who are covered by this illusory energy, *māyā*, are groping in the darkness. At night, when there is no sun, that portion of the world is covered by darkness. Then what do the people do? They have no light. They cannot see anything. So they grope in the darkness and spend the dark night waiting for the rising of the sun. "When the dark night is over, I'll take to my path and go."

Dark Night in an Inn

The goal of this human birth is to get Krishna, to approach the lotus feet of Lord Krishna. We are like weary travelers, traveling to Purushottam Dham, Jagannath Puri Dham, the place of Lord Jagannath, Krishna. On the way, when the night comes, such a traveler rests in an inn or a motel, just to spend the dark night. "I cannot go. The path is not visible. Let me rest and spend the dark night in an inn or motel." But don't just sleep there and snore, forgetting your goal. Remember that you are just waiting until the dark night is over. "When the effulgent sun rises, I'll again take up my path to Purushottam Dham." Somehow spend a few hours. But don't forget your goal by

becoming attached to this illusory world, which is filled with darkness.

Those who are fools, spending their days in this dark, illusory world, have become attached to this material world and are trying to lord it over and enjoy. They are suffering here since time immemorial, because they have forgotten that they are travelers to Purushottam Dham, Lord Jagannath's abode. They have been put into darkness and are crying and suffering. It is very regrettable that such callous persons cannot understand that they have been put into darkness and are suffering. They have developed attachment to this illusory world. Although they are suffering, they cannot understand it. Rather, they say, "Oh, no. We are very happy here. Yes. We are enjoying, enjoying." They are in a fool's paradise. Such callous persons are hopeless cases. But one who is conscious, "I have been put here in darkness. There is no light; all is dense darkness. I have been suffering and suffering." He is a hopeful case. He will wait for this dark night to be over. "I am a traveler to Purushottam Dham. When the effulgent sun rises, I'll catch up my path to Purushottam Dham." This is how one should spend his days in this material world.

Greatest Sorrow

In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta, madhya* 8.248, it is mentioned how once Mahaprabhu asked Ray Ramananda, *duḥkha-madhye kona duḥkha haya gurutara?* — "Which sorrow is the most intense?" Ray Ramananda answered, *kṛṣṇa-bhakta viraha-vinā*

duḥkha nāhi dekhi para — "Being separated from a *kṛṣṇa-bhakta*, a dear devotee of Krishna, is the most grievous sorrow and unhappiness." If someone becomes separated from a dear devotee of Krishna, he will experience acute pain. No other kind of sorrow can be compared to this. This is like *kṛṣṇa-viraha-duḥkha*, the pain of separation from Krishna. This is what Uddhava is feeling after the Krishna sun has set, after Krishna has disappeared. Uddhava has been put into such painful grief, a most sorrowful condition. And similar to this is *kṛṣṇa-bhakta-viraha*, separation from a dear devotee of Krishna, who is always with Krishna. If someone is separated from such a dear devotee, that is like being separated from Krishna. There is no other sorrow like that.

Mahaprabhu said this when Haridas Thakur disappeared. Haridas Thakur, who is known as *nāmācārya*, was day and night, twenty-four hours, engaged in chanting the holy name — not sleeping, not eating. That means he was always with Krishna. When he disappeared Mahaprabhu cried piteously, because such a dear devotee, who was always with Krishna, has left. That is the most acute pain. Mahaprabhu cried and said:

> *kṛpā kari' kṛṣṇa more diyāchilā saṅga*
> *svatantra kṛṣṇera icchā, — kailā saṅga-bhaṅga*
>
> *haridāsera icchā yabe ha-ila calite*
> *āmāra śakati tāṅre nārila rākhite*
>
> *icchā-mātre kailā nija-prāṇa niṣkrāmaṇa*
> *pūrve yena śuniyāchi bhīṣmera maraṇa*

> Krishna was so merciful to Me that He gave Me the association of such an elevated devotee, *paramahaṁsa*, such a dear devotee of Krishna, who was always with Krishna. Getting His association I felt that I was with Krishna. Now Haridas Thakur has disappeared. And the pain in My heart is most grievous.

The disappearance of such a dear devotee is very inauspicious. Therefore, Mahaprabhu cried. So one must cry because it is the most grievous pain, the most grievous distress one can feel. But us, foolish conditioned souls, we cannot cry for it. We have developed attachment only for this body and bodily relations. If we lose some of our near and dear ones, we cry and feel sorrow. "Oh, my dear friend died"; "My wife died"; "My father died"; "My mother died." He feels sorrow and cries. Such a foolish person. But who is crying when a dear devotee disappears? Who cries for that? Only the *vaiṣṇavas* cry. They never cry for material separation — if they lose their materially near and dear ones.

If you want to cry, cry for Krishna. Krishna is our nearest and dearest one. Krishna is our object of love. Krishna is the sole life. Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (7.9), *jīvanaṁ sarva-bhūteṣu* — "I am the life of all living entities." And Mahaprabhu was crying, *hā kṛṣṇa prāṇa mora* — "Krishna is My life. Now My life has gone out. I cannot see Krishna, I cannot find Krishna." He cried piteously when Haridas Thakur disappeared. "Krishna is so merciful. He gave Me the association of such a dear devotee who was always with Krishna. But now he

disappeared, so I cannot feel the presence of Krishna, who is My life. I am without life, I am without life." That is how one should cry.

Krishna is *svatantra*. His will is supreme. Similarly, whatever a dear devotee of Krishna wants, Krishna grants. And Haridas Thakur wanted that, "I'll leave this planet." And Krishna granted that to him. Although Mahaprabhu is Krishna, He said, "Haridas Thakur is such a dear devotee of Krishna, I have no power to check him." "Don't go, don't go. Stay with us." When such a dear devotee develops the desire that, "O Krishna, please take me. I don't want to live here", Krishna grants it, and he leaves this planet. Such was the case with Haridas Thakur. Mahaprabhu cried and picked up the transcendental body of Haridas Thakur. Chanting, *"hare kṛṣṇa"*, while shedding tears, He danced. This is what Mahaprabhu has taught us.

Cry for the Sun

A dear devotee of Krishna, who is an *ācārya*, comes here to give us Krishna. *kṛṣṇa se tomāra, kṛṣṇa dite pāra, tomāra śakati āche* — "O *vaiṣṇava* Thakur! Krishna belongs to you because you have bound up Krishna in your heart with the rope of love. Only you can give me Krishna." *Ācāryas* like my revered spiritual master, Srila Prabhupada, come here to give us Krishna, to spread Krishna consciousness throughout the world. He did such good to us. When such an *ācārya* disappears, such

a dear devotee of Krishna, we should cry because this is the most acute pain for us. When the *ācārya* leaves, a dark period comes. The sun sets and darkness comes. Here, Uddhava says that the Krishna sun has set, so darkness is prevailing. We are in darkness. What auspiciousness is there for us? Similarly, when such a dear devotee of Krishna, an *ācārya,* disappears, there is a dark period, a most inauspicious period. We are in such a most inauspicious dark period, groping in the darkness, now that such a dear devotee, *ācārya,* has gone. As the effulgent sun may be covered by a patch of black cloud, similarly such a dark period has come. After the disappearance of my revered spiritual master, a dear devotee of Krishna, Gaura, such a dark period has come. Definitely we are in a dark period. We are suffering and crying, groping in the darkness. What auspiciousness is there? So, we must cry for that effulgent sun to again rise. Let that patch of dark cloud disappear! We must cry for it.

We are spending the dark night in a motel. But we should not just sleep and snore. We should cry and cry, anxiously waiting for the rising of the effulgent sun. Let the darkness disappear and the effulgent sun rise, so that I can catch up the road to Purushottam Dham. I am just a traveler spending the dark night in this motel. This illusory material world is like a motel. The illusory energy of the Lord is like darkness, whereas Krishna is like

the sun — *kṛṣṇa sūrya-sama, māyā haya andhakara.* Those who are covered by this illusory energy are in darkness. We must cry for the effulgent sun to rise. Don't forget this. This is such severe grief for us. We have to cry and then pray for the effulgent sun to rise. Then all happiness, auspiciousness, and enlightenment will come. Then we will catch up the road leading to Purushottam Dham, the abode of Lord Jagannath. I am just a traveler going there. Otherwise, where is there any auspiciousness for us if we are bereft of devotion, Krishna, and such a dear devotee?

— Lecture, New York, May 1993

After the Disappearance of Sri Guru

When the *ācārya* disappears, a dark period comes, just as a patch of black cloud covers up the effulgent sun. It is an unfortunate time, but it is temporary. That cloud will go away. A violent storm may come and disperse the cloud, and then the effulgent sun will come out. If you trace out history you will find that after the disappearance of an *ācārya*, this period comes. That period came after the disappearance of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta. Then his disciple Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami appeared like the effulgent sun. After his disappearance, a dark period has come. The sun is there. It is only covered by a temporary black cloud. It will be dispersed and then the effulgent sun will come.

Mahaprabhu was doing *ācārya-līlā* — preaching. After the disappearance of Mahaprabhu the Goswamis came. They were not preachers. They were *bhajanānandīs*. They just stayed in the jungle of Vrindavan and wrote books. They were ordered to do

four things: a) Write *bhakti śāstras*, scriptures speaking the science of *bhakti;* b) Excavate the lost *tīrthas* such as Shyama-kund and Radha-kund; c) Install deities, construct temples for the deities, and teach the process of deity worship; and d) Teach *vaiṣṇava* etiquette — Sanatan Goswami wrote *Hari-bhakti-vilāsa*, wherein he quotes many *śāstras* describing *vaiṣṇava* etiquette.

They were doing these four things. They were not preaching, but they were preparing the preachers. Scriptures are needed for that. Otherwise, what will a preacher speak? We quote authority from *śāstra*. In *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 22.65), Chaitanya Mahaprabhu spoke the definition of *uttama-adhikārī* to Sanatan Goswami:

śāstra-yuktye sunipuṇa, dṛḍha-śraddhā yāṅra
'uttama-adhikārī' sei tāraye saṁsāra

Śāstra-yuktye sunipuṇa — he is very proficient in presenting *śāstric* conclusions, *siddhāntas*. By presenting them strongly he defeats bogus philosophies and establishes pure *bhakti-siddhānta*. He is very strong in *tattva*. He is *dṛḍha-śraddhā* — he has unshakable, strong faith. Such a person is an *uttama-adhikārī*. Only such an *adhikārī vaiṣṇava* can deliver the whole world — *tāraye saṁsāra*.

The six Goswamis were preparing preachers. Jiva Goswami sent his three students, Shyamananda Thakur, Narottam Das Thakur, and Srinivas Acharya, with books and told them, "Go and preach!" These three elevated *vaiṣṇavas* went to preach. Shyamananda Thakur came to Orissa. Narottam Das Thakur went to the eastern side, to Manipur and Assam, etc. And Srinivas Acharya

preached in Bengal. They are the first preachers who came after the disappearance of Mahaprabhu.

Then came Bhaktivinode Thakur. Gaura Kishor Das Babaji and Jagannath Das Babaji were not preachers. They were *bhajanānandīs*. Only Bhaktivinode Thakur came out, that is *ācārya*. After Bhaktivinode Thakur came, then successively Bhaktivinode's son Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Thakur came, and then Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada.

Bhaktisiddhanta had many *sannyāsī* disciples. Also, Mahaprabhu had predicted,

> *pṛthivīte āche yata nagarādi grāma*
> *sarvatra pracāra haibe mora nāma*

My name and teachings will be spread to all corners of the world.

Still, after the disappearance of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, a black period was there.

Who fulfilled Mahaprabhu's prediction? Bhaktivinode Thakur started. Because India was blindly following the West, he thought that the books and teachings of Chaitanya Mahaprabhu should be presented in English, and that this science should be taught in the Western world. He was very disappointed that although this culture is here in India, Indians are blindly following Western civilization, dog civilization. Bhaktivinode Thakur is *mahājana, ācārya*. He had the transcendental vision that Mahaprabhu's teachings should be presented to the Western world in English, and then, when the Western people would accept it, the Indians' eyes would be opened.

Bhaktivinode Thakur also predicted that a very powerful son would be born who would fulfill this desire, who would preach and spread Mahaprabhu's teachings in the West and throughout the world. His son, Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati, was born. He was a very powerful *vaiṣṇava*. From his very birth he was a *brahmacārī*, and he was very strong, very powerful. He did not go to the West, but he prepared some of his *sannyāsī* disciples to go and preach. He sent Bhaktipradip Tirtha and Bon Maharaja, but they could not achieve success.

My *guru-mahārāja*, Srila Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, was just a *gṛhastha*. He was not a *sannyāsī*. He was not living in the *āśrama*. But he got the real mercy of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, Thakur Bhaktivinode, and Sri Chaitanya Mahaprabhu. He was empowered because he was a true follower. He did not twist the teachings. He did not add any deliberation to them. He followed them "as it is". Then he preached in English throughout the world. In their first meeting Srila Bhaktisiddhanta told him to preach in the West. He could understand, "The person has now come to me who can do it."

Our Srila Prabhupada was a young man at that time. After the disappearance of Srila Bhaktisiddhanta, all of his *sannyāsī* disciples fought with each other. There was a case before the Supreme Court. They were quarreling like dogs for a piece of bone.

Srila Bhaktisiddhanta had set up sixty-four temples. In the court case they were all divided. This *maṭha* went to this person, and this *maṭha* went to another. So many, many divisions. It was a black period. There was no strong *ācārya*. And now, after the disappearance of Srila

Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupada, a similar period has come. Quarreling and fighting is also going on now in Prabhupada's society. So many have lost faith and left. Some of them became *karmīs* and are doing other business. So many of the gurus, the pillars of the society, fell down! Again, this is a dark period. In any case, Mahaprabhu's movement will never be lost. The day will come when the black patch of clouds will be dispersed and the effulgent sun will come out. Prabhupada has said the day will come when the *ācārya* will appear.

Devotee: How have previous *ācāryas* been recognized by the *vaiṣṇavas*?

Gour Govinda Swami: By their potency, their effulgence, and their proficiency. How they present facts. They have been recognized by their clarity, their quoting of authority, defeating bogus philosophies, establishing pure *siddhānta*, and attracting many people, making many persons *vaiṣṇavas*. That is the proof. Krishna is all-attractive. It is said that in the material world Krishna attracts the *jīvas* in two forms: in the form of His holy name and in the form of *ācārya* — *nāma-rupe, ācārya-rupe.*

Devotee: Today, it seems like ISKCON is focused more on following an institutional path than in recognizing and following the *vaiṣṇava-sādhus*. For example, guruship is decided by the GBC. Also, it seems like many are attracted to take *sannyāsa* just to get some power.

Gour Govinda Swami: Yes. What to do? It is a matter of time, place, and circumstance. "Please, give me position." Better to give it to him. Don't let him feel disappointed or depressed. This is a large worldwide organization, and somehow we have to keep it up.

Two aspects are there — two facets, two sides — and one of them is the organizational consideration. It is a different consideration, how to keep up the organization. We should not allow the organization to be split up, broken into pieces. In order to keep up the institution, the GBC is doing these kinds of things."

Devotee: When there are failures in this organization, and we see gurus falling down, it gives a bad name to . . .

Gour Govinda Swami: You should understand this thing. The society gives opportunity. If one has been given a position in the society, and he is really intelligent, he will understand, "I don't deserve it; I have no qualification. But still this opportunity has come to me. So I must make myself qualified, then I can stay in the position. Otherwise I will lose it."

For the sake of maintaining the institution, opportunity is given. Unity must be there. We should not allow it to be split up. This is an organizational matter. Why should a member feel discouraged that he cannot get an opportunity?

Srila Prabhupada did the same thing. Prabhupada knew these people were not qualified. But he gave them *sannyāsa*. Prabhupada said, "Take this opportunity! Do it now!" Otherwise, how could he manage the society? He would give someone *sannyāsa*, and then put that *sannyāsī* in one area to manage. In this way the *brahmacārīs* and devotees will obey him, because he is a *sannyāsī*.

Mahaprabhu took *sannyāsa* for this same reason. He was Mahaprabhu, the Supreme Personality of Godhead. But because He was a *gṛhastha*, many were not accepting Him and were criticizing. Mahaprabhu

thought, "I have to take *sannyāsa,* because a *sannyāsī* has prestige." The general people have the notion that a *māyāvādī sannyāsī* is Narayan. Mahaprabhu thought, "I must take *sannyāsa,* otherwise these people won't listen to Me." So He took up *sannyāsa* from Keshava Bharati, who was a *sannyāsī* in the *māyāvādī sampradāya.* However, Mahaprabhu preached *vaiṣṇava* philosophy. That was His purpose.

Similarly, Srila Prabhupada gave *sannyāsa.* Otherwise, how can you manage such a worldwide organization? All of the *brahmacārīs* and devotees will accept if a *sannyāsī* is the leader. They will offer him obeisances and accept what he says. But if he is a *gṛhastha,* if he is a *brahmacārī,* nobody will accept.

Prabhupada gave an opportunity. If you are intelligent you will understand this. You should think, "I don't deserve it; I am not qualified. But he gave me an opportunity, so I must make myself qualified and keep up the position." But instead of being intelligent you are a fool. You are thinking, "Now I am a *sannyāsī!* Now I am great! Now I am guru! Now I am *ācārya!"* You have developed pride. You commit *aparādha* and fall down. This is the reason for these fall downs. So when we think of organizational matters we should consider all of these things. Otherwise how we will maintain the worldwide organization? These two aspects are there, the spiritual aspect and the organizational aspect. This is the organizational aspect.

— From an evening *darśana,* Bhubaneswar, 31 March 1992.



After the Guru Leaves

Devotee: What happens after the departure of one's guru?

Gour Govinda Swami: Guru means pure devotee, *vaiṣṇava*, a very, very intimate associate of Lord Krishna. In *aprakata līlā*, when he disappears, at that time one should not think that guru is not there. He is always there.

Krishna is always there. If you have eyes, you can see Krishna. *Brahma-saṁhitā* (5.38) states:

premāñjana-cchurita-bhakti-vilocanena
santaḥ sadaiva hṛdayeṣu vilokayanti

yaṁ śyāmasundaram acintya-guṇa-svarūpaṁ
govindam ādi-puruṣaṁ tam ahaṁ bhajāmi

I worship Govinda, the primeval Lord, who is Syamasundar, Krishna Himself, with inconceivable innumerable attributes, whom the pure devotees see in their heart of hearts with the eye of devotion tinged with the salve of love.

If you have *bhakti-cakṣu*, the eye of devotion, if you have developed *kṛṣṇa-prema*, then, *yāṅhā yāṅhā*

netra paḍe tāṅhā kṛṣṇa sphure — you can see Krishna everywhere. [*Cc. ādi* 4.85]. How could Prahlad Maharaja see Krishna in a stone pillar when his father could not? Krishna says in *Bhagavad-gītā* (6.30), *tasyāhaṁ na praṇaśyāmi, sa ca me na praṇaśyati* — "My devotee always sees Me and I always see him."

Krishna is always there. Krishna is always speaking. Krishna is always teaching. But one may ask, "How is He there? How is He speaking? How is He teaching?

Mahaprabhu instructs Sanatan Goswami (*Cc. madhya* 20.123):

> *'śāstra-guru-ātma'-rūpe āpanāre jānāna*
> *'kṛṣṇa mora prabhu, trātā' ——jīvera haya jñāna*

Krishna speaks through *śāstra*, Vedic scripture. The Vedas come from Krishna. He is the source of Veda. But what He says in the Vedas is very difficult to understand. It should be understood by *tattva-vicāra*, absolute consideration, not *aparā-vicāra*, apparent consideration. *Māyāvādīs* see only the apparent consideration.

In Your Heart

Then comes the question of guru. Guru, the spiritual master, is the representative of Krishna. He is a very dear devotee of Krishna, who is *caitya-guru*, seated in the heart as Supersoul. The spiritual master is always there. Don't think that he is not physically present, that he is not there. He is there. He is always there. If you have developed love for the spiritual

master, if you have developed that eye, then you can see him, you can talk to him. And he is also present in the form of books, *vāṇī–rupa;* his instructions are there.

Kaṭha Upaniṣad (1.2.23) states:

nāyam ātmā pravacanena labhyo
na medhayā na bahudhā śrutena
yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas
tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām

You cannot understand the absolute truth through your own mundane scholarship, your own mundane intelligence. *Medhayā* — nor can you understand it by listening to many lectures by *karmīs, jñānīs,* and *yogīs.* Those who are not devotees, who never come under a bona fide disciplic succession, cannot know it.

Then how can you know? *Kaṭha Upaniṣad* says, *yam evaiṣa vṛṇute tena labhyas tasyaiṣa ātmā vivṛṇute tanuṁ svām* — *ātmā* here means *paramātmā,* the Supersoul who is seated in everyone's heart. Assuming a body, He personally comes as spiritual master to teach *paramātmā-tattva.* He is *caitya-guru.* Unless He speaks, you cannot understand.

Where does he appear? Who meets him? That is another question. When an individual person is very, very inquisitive, very eager to understand all these things, the *paramātmā* knows, "Oh, now he is very eager to understand Me, so I must help him." So He comes, assuming the body of guru. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 19.151) states:

brahmāṇḍa bhramite kona bhāgyavān jīva
guru-kṛṣṇa-prasāde pāya bhakti-latā-bīja

After wandering through so many planetary systems, undergoing so many species of life, such a person who meets a bona fide spiritual master is most fortunate, *bhāgyavān*. It is Krishna's mercy. *kṛṣṇa kṛpāte guru mile guru kṛpāte kṛṣṇa mile* — by Krishna's mercy you get a bona fide spiritual master, and by the mercy of the spiritual master you get Krishna. *Paramātmā* arranges that meeting. So we must be very eager, very inquisitive, as Dhruva Maharaja was, to get the Lord. *Paramātmā* arranged for Narada Muni to appear before him. "All right, he is very eager now. You go and show him the path, help him."

Mercy Through Instructions

Similarly, for that disciple who is crying, "Oh, my spiritual master has disappeared. How can I be helped? Who will teach me? How can I know? His *vāṇī* is there, his instructions, books are there, but I cannot understand the purport. Although the *vāṇī* is there, it is very difficult for me to understand it." When you become very, very inquisitive. *Śāstra* has its mercy. Kaviraj Goswami has said (*Cc. madhya* 20.120):

> *sādhu-śāstra-kṛpāya yadi kṛṣṇonmukha haya*
> *sei jīva nistare, māyā tāhāre chāḍaya*

If by the blessings of a pure devotee and the scripture a conditioned soul becomes devoted to Krishna, he becomes liberated; *māyā* gives him up.

Śāstra is also one of the incarnations of the Lord. *Caitanya-caritāmṛta* (*madhya* 24.318) says, *kṛṣṇa-tulya*

bhāgavata vibhu, sarvāśraya. Bhāgavata-grantha, the scripture, is like Krishna. Krishna is *vibhu,* the all-powerful Supreme Lord. *Bhāgavata* is also all-powerful. We take shelter of the lotus feet of Krishna, and we also take shelter of *bhāgavata-grantha.* If Krishna showers His mercy and *grantha* and *sādhu* shower their mercy — *sādhu-śāstra-kṛpā* — then we will be attracted to Krishna. *sei jīva nistare māyā tāhāre chāḍaya* — then we will be free from the clutches of *māyā.* So, *grantha,* scripture, has its *kṛpā.* This is one of the forms of the lord.

And the instruction of guru is also guru. You'll get *guru-kṛpā* through his instructions, *vāṇī.* One who is very, very eager and very, very inquisitive, prays to his spiritual master, "O my spiritual master, you have departed. You are not physically present, so I cannot understand. I am such an ignorant fool. I have no qualification. Though your instructions are there, I cannot understand what you have said. Please help me."

In Another Form

So guru will also come, but not in the same form. He may come in the form of a *sādhu,* a very dear devotee, who is also very dear to your spiritual master. Through him this will be revealed. Doubts will be cleared. Through him you will be able to understand *tattva,* purport. You should think, "My guru is teaching me, he is speaking to me in this form." Don't think, "My guru is not here. He has departed. What shall I do?" Pray fervently to your spiritual master. He must help you. We have personal experience. We have been helped in this way. Also, the

great *mahājanas, ācāryas,* they have also said this. This is an eternal process. Krishna is eternal, and His teachings are eternal. The process is also eternal. It is always going on. But we should be very, very inquisitive. Inquisitiveness must be there. One should not feel desperate. There is nothing pessimistic in this process. It is all optimism.

Maintaining Eagerness

Question: I was eager to have guru. Now I have guru, but how do I maintain this constant eagerness?

Gour Govinda Swami: You must maintain it by thinking, "Out of Krishna's mercy I met my guru. But how can I always get the association of my guru?" You should be very eager to always have the association of guru and listen to him. Unless you listen to your guru, your doubts cannot be dispelled. If you cannot get the mercy of guru, you cannot get Krishna. So you should be very, very eager, "How can I best serve my guru and please him?" *yasya prasādād bhagavat-prasādo, yasyāprasādān na gatiḥ kuto 'pi* — if gurudeva is pleased, then Krishna will be pleased and you will get Krishna's mercy; if gurudeva is displeased, then where is your position, where is your place, *gatiḥ kuto 'pi?* So our concern, our duty, is to please the spiritual master. How is that done?

guru-mukha-padma-vākya, cittete kariyā aikya,
āra nā kariha mane āśā

One should carry out the orders of the spiritual master. Gurudeva has many instructions. Some of his instructions are general, and some are specific. General instructions are for everyone. Specific instructions are what he tells specific, individual disciples. One should

be especially eager to follow the individual instructions that gurudeva gave to you. One should think, "Gurudeva has ordered me to do this. How can I best do it? How can I best please my spiritual master? How can I best serve him and please him? Doing so I will get the mercy of Krishna. Otherwise, *janama biphala*, my life is unsuccessful."

"I Have Not Gotten!"

If one always thinks like that, then one can maintain that constant eagerness. *vaiṣṇava kṛpā taha sarva siddhi* — If you get the mercy of a *vaiṣṇava*, pure devotee, or guru, then you can have all perfection, *sarva siddhi*. One should think, "Oh, I can't do anything. I'm such a wretched, unqualified, unworthy person! I cannot render any service to my guru. I cannot please him. I have not gotten anything. I have not gotten the mercy of my guru. I have not pleased him. I have not taken advantage of meeting my guru. Oh, what shall I do? I have not done anything. I do not have the mercy of guru! How can I get his mercy?" You should always think like that. If you are satisfied and think, "Oh, I have guru. I have pleased him. I have gotten his mercy," then everything is finished! It means you have not gotten it. This is how you can maintain eagerness. Otherwise, it is not possible.

(*Darśana*, 18 July 1986, Paris, France)

Serving the Guru's Mission

(Conversation with devotees in New York City, July 1994:) You mention that many devotees are losing faith in ISKCON and are leaving our society to find shelter elsewhere. That is not good. They should not leave ISKCON; that will never please Srila Prabhupada. Develop patience and tolerance and pray to Srila Prabhupada from the core of your heart. How is it that he will not help you? (Letter, 18 December 1993)

There are three things that are very important to me. One is that I want to preach to the preachers. It causes me so much pain to see the devotees falling down and going away. The second thing is that I want to show how everything is in Prabhupada's books. Those persons who are saying that Srila Prabhupada only gave ABC, it causes me so much pain in my heart. I want to make them silent. And the third thing is that I want to show how everything is in ISKCON and that devotees do not have to go elsewhere for higher teachings.

(Letter, 3 November 1994:) My opinion is that Srila Prabhupada will not be happy with these senior devotees going outside of ISKCON.

Srila Prabhupada has said that everything is in his books. If you try to understand this, then by the mercy of Srila Prabhupada it will all be made clear to you.

It is a fact that if an elevated *vaiṣṇava* is there, then one should go and take his association. There is no harm in that. But in this case, there is a danger that the discipline in our organization will be affected adversely. If the leaders are going outside of ISKCON, how will we be able to maintain discipline? Srila Prabhupada has formed this society, and this threat to his society will only cause him pain. With this consideration, they should not go. That will only lead to indiscipline in our society.

Two sides are there, philosophical and organizational. On the organizational side, this practice is not good. Therefore we have this GBC body, which makes so many rules to maintain the discipline of the members of our society. But how will we be able to keep discipline now? No one will listen — "If the leaders are going, why should we listen? We will also go." This will create only trouble.

(Evening *darśana*, Bhubaneswar, 20 November 1989:) Devotee: You said we should always seek the association of advanced devotees. When Srila Prabhupada left the planet, some of his disciples took shelter of one of his godbrothers.

Gour Govinda Maharaja: Thereby they committed a mistake. For the clarification of some philosophical

doubt or to accept *śikṣā*, one may go to another *vaiṣṇava*, but why leave?

Devotee: Some people took shelter of this Maharaja, and naturally, because he was giving some instruction, they became attached to him and accepted him as *śikṣā-guru*. Because of this, in some cases, it seems that our society rejected them rather than they rejected our society.

Gour Govinda Maharaja: Let me be excused at the feet of a *vaisnava*. This Maharaja is a great *vaisnava*. I pay my obeisance to him. He is my guru. He is the godbrother of my guru. But he should have taught these ISKCON devotees, "Don't leave ISKCON. Take *śikṣā* from me if you have some doubts. I am prepared to clarify them. But don't leave ISKCON." Why didn't he teach this thing?

Devotee: So it's alright for Srila Prabhupada disciples to accept another *śikṣā guru*, but they should not leave ISKCON?

Gour Govinda Maharaja: Why should they leave ISKCON?

Devotee: I spoke to one devotee who had taken shelter of a Maharaja outside of ISKCON, and he said that his life was made very difficult within ISKCON and he could no longer preach. He was so restricted. Therefore, in order to preach, he left ISKCON.

Gour Govinda Maharaja: What difficulty is there? Preaching the message of Gauranga Mahaprabhu? Mahaprabhu says, "I will help you. You'll never be affected by *maya*." If you have no faith in Mahaprabhu, then you will be put into difficulties. Don't be afraid of problems. Krishna is there. His representative, the guru,

is there. They are always with you. They are always prepared to help you. These dangers, these problems, difficulties will help you to become fixed. They are welcome. Therefore Kuntidevi says, *vipadaḥ santu tāḥ śaśvat tatra tatra jagad-guro* — "I wish that all those calamities would happen again and again." Why did she say like that?

Devotee: Because by those troubles she was always able to remember Krishna.

Gour Govinda Maharaja: Yes. Difficulties, dangers, and problems help one to be more attached to Krishna. Unless there are difficulties, one will not turn his face towards Krishna. Thereby he is in fool's paradise, thinking, "I am OK." But he is in danger. He cannot understand it. So all of these difficulties, problems, and dangers, they are *kṛpā*, mercy in disguise. Srila Bhaktisiddhanta Saraswati Prabhupada Maharaja said, "Accept all the sufferings in this material world as the mercy of the Supreme Lord."

(*Darśana*, South London, 29 September 1991:)
Devotee: You have to give us your blessings, Maharaja.

Gour Govinda Swami: I have this blessing, "Get the blessings of my Guru Maharaja, Srimad A. C. Bhaktivedanta Swami Prabhupadji Maharaja. Be a member of ISKCON, the society he founded worldwide. Serve him. Remain in the society. Serve guru and Gauranga." This is my blessing. Nothing else. This is everything. Thank you.

Guru has not Left

Devotee: Since guru's discipline is required to control the mind, how can the disciple get that discipline after the guru passes away?

Gour Govinda Maharaja: Ah! You are a fool! The guru is always with the disciple. The guru's passing away is only apparent. The guru is always there. "I am eternally his disciple, and he is eternally my guru." Such relationship is there. His passing away is only apparent. He is always with us. We have such a loving relationship. Although he is not present here, although he's gone back home, back to Godhead, from that Vrajabhumi, eternal Goloka Vrindavan, he has his eye on his dear disciple and takes care of him. *cakṣu-dāna dila yei, janme janme prabhu sei* — "One who has opened my eyes, he is my master life after life." So why not in this life? If the guru passes away, he still has his eye on his dear disciple. He takes care of him. He appears in the form of *sādhu* and *śāstra*. Wherever the disciple is staying, if some qualified

sādhu vaiṣṇava is nearby, the guru empowers him and teaches through him. That is how guru is there. That is how he is *nitya,* eternal. This is the meaning of, "I am eternally his disciple, and he is eternally my master." Fools cannot understand. The stupid mind starts speaking, "Oh! My guru is no more. He is gone, gone. Now I can act anyway I like. I can do anything." Now you become a hippy with long hair, a big moustache, and drink liquor — "Oh, my guru has passed away. He is no more. Prabhupada is no more." They are fools. So many of Prabhupada's disciples are doing like this. Seeing them, my heart cracks. Fools! Fools!

The guru is always there. He always takes care of one who is serious. If you are really crying for the help of guru, he is always there. "Oh, my guru has gone, I am independent now. I can do anything I like." Then you have become servant of your stupid mind — *"go-dāsa"*. (*Darśana* in New Talavan, 17 June 1994)

The Only Lacking is with Us

We must have full faith in *sādhu-śāstra-guru,* and we must do our service. This is the material plane, and at the same time it is *Kali-yuga,* but you should have firm determination, patience and should not deviate in any circumstance. Always pray to Lord Chaitanya and guru. They will help you. We are very weak, but *caitya-guru* is in our heart. He'll give inspiration. Krishna as *paramātmā* arranges that thing. For one who is a sincere soul, who is very eager to have it, Krishna makes arrangements. He knows, "This soul wants this thing," so He makes arrangements. Our only business is to always pray to Krishna, to always cry, "Help me, Chaitanya Mahaprabhu! Help me, Guru Maharaja!" And you'll get help. Have full faith in it. Don't be desperate. We should be very eager to get it and have association of pure devotees. *Sādhu-saṅga* means to associate with a person more advanced than yourself. Then you will benefit. Otherwise, no benefit will come. It may look impossible, but still nothing is impossible for Krishna. Krishna will make the arrangement. *Vāṇī,* instructions,

are there. When nothing is available, we should associate with instructions and books. Our sincere prayers will reach Krishna, and the day will come when you will meet such a person. We should always be praying, "Krishna, please help me!" Chanting Hare Krishna means the soul is crying, *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa kṛṣṇa hare hare* — "O Krishna's *śakti,* Radharani! O Krishna! Please engage me in Your service. I am fallen."

ayi nanda-tanuja kiṅkaraṁ
patitaṁ māṁ viṣame bhavāmbudhau
kṛpayā tava pāda-paṅkaja-
sthita-dhūlī-sadṛśaṁ vicintaya

"I am Your *kiṅkara,* Your servant, but somehow I've fallen in the depths of this ocean of nescience. Please shower Your mercy. Take me as a particle of dust at Your lotus feet." [*Cc. antya* 20.32, *Śikṣāṣṭaka* 5]

The soul is crying. By uttering this *hari-nāma* — *hare kṛṣṇa hare kṛṣṇa* — the soul is crying. Chant in this way and you will get it, miraculously, unexpectedly. Nothing is impossible for Krishna. It is impossible for us, but Krishna wants that thing. The only lacking is with us.

— Evening program, Paris, 1987.



The guru's passing away is only apparent. The guru is always there. "I am eternally his disciple, and he is eternally my guru." He is always with us. We have such a loving relationship. Although he is not present here, although he's gone back home, back to Godhead, from that Vrajabhumi, eternal Goloka Vrindavan, he has his eye on his dear disciple and takes care of him.